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Centaurs of the Mind

Imagination and Fiction-making in the Work of Fulke Greville

Freya Sierhuis

The appreciation of the erotic poetry of *Caelica* has been slow to catch up with the gradual revival of interest in the work of Fulke Greville. Thom Gunn's 1968 anthology of Greville's poetry presented an eloquent case for the emotional power and perspicacity of Greville's love lyric. Yet where the poet of *Boss Cupid* could see ways in which the love poetry of an Elizabethan courtier might speak to a modern audience directly, literary critics have tended to approach Greville's erotic poetry through comparison either to Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*, or to the religious poetry that dominates the last part of the sequence. Greville's editor Bullough, who recognized the underlying unity of thought within the cycle, nevertheless viewed its progress as one of development over time that bore witness to the growth of the poet's mind.[1] To his credit, Bullough recognized the charm and originality of the love poetry. Of the anti-Petrarchist poems he writes, a touch primly perhaps: 'Of humour he has plenty in *Caelica*, though of a brusque, ironic, even sardonic playfulness which must have been somewhat disconcerting to the ladies he courted', while the Anacreontics are described as 'delightful'.[2]

Few critics have followed Bullough's lead. The double comparison between Sidney and Greville, and between 'earlier' and 'later' Greville, has adversely affected the love poetry by insisting on what it isn't, rather than what it is; neither as fluent and musical as the poetry of Sidney, nor as urgent and powerful as the religious poems.[3] This view tends to circumscribe Greville's literary accomplishment within

[1] Bullough, 37, 49. [2] Bullough, 23.

[3] 'The love poems show him imitating Sidney's rhetorical method and failing as often as he succeeded. Again, out of failure came discovery of his limits and of a method appropriate to his gifts', Ronald A. Rebholz, 50–67, 59; More subtle, and more sensitive towards the consonance between Greville's poetics and epistemology is David A. Roberts, 'Fulke Greville's Aesthetic Reconsidered', *SP* 74.4 (1977): 388–405. While I share elements of Roberts' interpretation, one of the aims of this present chapter is to challenge the division of *Caelica* in early, middle, and late poems. For an analysis of Greville's ideas on metaphoric language, see June Dwyer, 'Fulke Greville's Aesthetic: Another Perspective', *SP* 78.3 (1981): 255–74; *SP* 74.4 (1977): 388–405. Similar views can be found in Tom W.N. Parker's *Proportional Form in the Sonnets of the Sidney Circle: Loving in Truth* (Oxford, 2018), ch. 2 'Fulke Greville and Proportional Form: *Caelica* in Manuscript and Print'. An exception is Alvo, 42–72.

what Greville's biographer Rebholz described as a poetic style defined through limitation, an interpretation often explained via an appeal to Greville's comparison between his own 'images of life' and Sidney's 'images of wit' in *The Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney* .[4] The established view of Greville as a philosophical and religious poet can accommodate the critique of the hypocrisies of courtly love found in some of the Myra and Cynthia poems but is decidedly less comfortable with the playful eroticism of 'Away with these self-loving lads' and 'Faction which ever dwells' or the abrasive, openly sexual satire of 'All my sense like Beacons flame'. This more playful, sensual, and whimsical streak in Greville's poetry comes across strongly in the songbook adaptations of Dowland and Cavendish. Even Martin Peerson's memorial volume *Mottects or Grave Chamber Music* (1630), in which the more serious poetry predominates, includes two of the Anacreontics, *Caelica* XXV and XXVI. The nymphs and shepherds of the bucolic poems share their environment with a gathering of ephemeral creatures from English mythology and fairy-lore, including sorcerers, sprites, and Robin Goodfellows (*Caelica* V, XXI, XXIII, XXXI, L). The intrusion of the figure of Robin Goodfellow, a type of mischievous domestic sprite also known as a puck or a brownie, into the narrative of *Caelica* holds particular fascination.[5] While written earlier than *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the creatures inhabiting Greville's pastoral poetry nevertheless belong to the same imaginative world. The sprites and Goodfellows of *Caelica* are perhaps closer to the world of folklore than the fairies of Oberon's court, yet they share the same lineage, and hold a similar function. They graft the games and gambles of courtly love within a bucolic setting associated with an older popular-festive culture of May dances, harvest games, and fairy-lore, just as they fuse the literary forms of Anacreontic and Ovidian imitation with that of the fabliau and the popular proverb. Yet the fleeting appearances of these half-world creatures also serve to draw our attention to the ambivalent nature of love. In this context, it is interesting to note that the name Robin Goodfellow crops up in association with Greville's persona as a courtier and a ladies' man. As Bacon recounts in an anecdote from the *Apophthegms*:

> Sir Fulke Greville had much and private access to Queen Elizabeth which he used honourably and did many men good. Yet he would say merrily of himself that he was like Robin Goodfellow; for when the maids spilt the milk pans or kept any racket, they would lay it upon Robin: so what tales the ladies about the Queen told her, or other bad offices that they did, they would put it upon him.[6]

One can discern in this fleeting glimpse something elusive, yet nevertheless bearing an undeniable affinity with the imaginative world of *Caelica*. For, despite his menial role and tasks, Robin Goodfellow, the son of a mortal woman and a 'Hee-fairy' in some accounts, shares some of the uncanny traits of his fairy cousins.[7] 'Sweet Robin', who rewards hard work and warrants the principle of fairness and

[4] *Dedication*, ch. 18, 134.

[5] K.M. Briggs, *The Anatomy of Puck. An Examination of Fairy Beliefs among Shakespeare's Contemporaries and Successors* (London: Routledge, 1959), 25f, 40f, 47, 59, 71, 75f, 84, 85, 93.

[6] Rebholz, 54.

[7] Anon., *Robin Goodfellow, His Mad Pranks and Merry Iests* (1639), A4r–v.

reciprocity in all transactions, erotic or otherwise, is equally a trickster; a detached, cold-eyed observer, who deals merriment and menace in equal measure. In Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Mary-Ellen Lamb has observed, Puck comes to resemble Cupid, yet in Greville's *Caelica*, it is Cupid who resembles a puck, a hobgoblin, or a sprite.[8]

Compared to Sidney's Cupid, who is usually portrayed as an infant, or as a helpless little boy, disarmed by Stella's virtue, Greville's 'sweet boy' is more wily and mischievous. 'Cupid', Bradin Cormack writes, 'is Greville's great figure of desire's swerves and complexities.'[9] In other words, Cupid is the figure through which Greville explores the dynamic of desire, imagination, and erotic fixation. The love poetry which scrutinizes the relationship between the mistress and the lover in terms of projection and fetishization, on closer inspection turn out to share the same philosophical grounds as the poems which examine the mechanisms of spiritual slavery later in the cycle. Some poems, such as *Caelica* XXXIX which, in uniquely Grevillean manner, employs the word 'to babylon' as a verb, explicate the link between courtly love and idolatry

The pride of flesh by reach of humane witt,
Did purpose once to over-reach the skye
And where before God dro[illegible] the world for it,
Yet babylon it built upp, n[illegible] dy[illegible]
God knewe these fo[illegible]ow foolish [illegible]y wrought
That [illegible]ny with p[illegible] would bre[illegible]
Straig[illegible]one could tell his fellow what he thought
Their tongues were chang[illegible] men not taught to speake
Soe I that heavenli[illegible]ac[illegible]d comprehend,
In mort[illegible]ate of [illegible]ca's faire hart,
To [illegible] myself, there did intend,
Wit[illegible]tura[illegible]dnes[illegible]d with passions ar[illegible]
But when I [illegible]ght [illegible]lf of her self free,
All's chang'd[illegible]e understands all men but mee.

Caelica XXXIX is one of the many in the sequence that deal with disillusionment, where satire, encapsulated in the closing couplet's throwaway accusation of 'carnal knowledge', shadows a deeper philosophical and religious point. The first line, 'The pride of flesh by reach of human wit', aligns the poem with the exegetical tradition going back to Augustine's *City of God*, which interprets the story of the building of the Tower of Babel as a key episode in the continuing struggle between pride and humility.[10] Viewed this way, the poem parodies the confusion of languages by setting

[8] Mary Ellen Lamb, 'Taken by the Fairies: Fairy Practices and the Production of Popular Culture in A Midsummer Night's Dream', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 51.3 (2000): 277–312.

[9] Bradin Cormack, 'In the Labyrinth: Gunn's Greville', *Gunn*, 161–77, 170; On the representation of Cupid as a boy, see Tom McFaul, 'The Childish Love of Philip Sidney and Fulke Greville', *SJ* 24.2 (2006): 37–65.

[10] Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, Volume V: Books 16–18.35 translated by Eva M. Sanford and William M. Green, LCL 415 (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), XVI.4, pp 24–31. Idolatry as spiritual fornication is of course a frequent metaphor in the Old Testament; see 2 Chron. 21:13; Jer. 3:2, 3:9, 13:27, Eze. 16:17 and *passim*.

the lover and his lady at odds over the meaning of the verb to understand. The conceit of the tower in the heart, which simultaneously evokes the inner architectonics of the heart of Petrarchan lyric, and the sensual language of the Song of Songs, alarmingly juxtaposes intimacy, hubris, and danger; erotic disappointment, and salvation history. The evocation of Canticles, like a faint echo, guides the reader to a similar moment of parataxis in the Book of Revelation, where after the destruction of Babylon, 'with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication', an angelic voice calls out: 'And the light of candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the Bridegroom and of the Bride shall be hear no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.' (Rev.19. 23)

PHANTASIA *AND* IMAGINATIO *IN EARLY MODERN CULTURE*

Yet iconoclastic satire is only part of Greville's gambit. Rather, these poems chart the subtle ways in which the imagination entraps us in nets of our own making. In analysing the workings of the imagination, the poems operate within a wider controversy within philosophy, poetics, and faculty psychology on the powers of the imaginative faculty.[11] The imagination occupied a highly fraught space within early modern culture as the locus of conflicting, often irreconcilable claims, which tended to highlights its dangers, as well as its powers, and its inescapable role in cognition.[12] Greville's poetry indexes these contradictory impulses and makes them philosophically productive in a way that is unique within the tradition of English Petrarchist love lyric.

Early modern ideas about the imagination did not form a coherent body of thought, but rather constituted an amalgamation of Aristotelian, Platonic and Neoplatonic, Galenic, and Scholastic ideas. Medieval and early modern medical science and moral philosophy had always been acutely aware of the imagination's liability to distortion and error. In the tradition of Scholastic commentaries on Aristotle's *De anima*, the imagination was seen to occupy a crux within the perceptual chain between sense perception and intellection, acting as the drawing bridge between the body and soul. According to this schema, sense perceptions would be conveyed through the *species*, minute simulacra omitted by external objects, which

[11] Throughout this chapter, I use 'imagination' where early modern people would have differentiated between *imaginatio*; the part of the imaginative faculty closely allied to sense perception and the *sensus communis*, and *fantasia*, or *fantasy*, the part responsible for the assembling and manipulation of mental images that works independently from sense perception. While this distinction is by no means systematically maintained, 'fantasy' tends to be reserved for the imagination's creative capacity.

[12] Murray Wright Bundy, *The Theory of the Imagination in Classical and Medieval Thought* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971 [1928]); William Rossky, 'Imagination in the English Renaissance: Psychology and Poetic', in *Studies in the Renaissance*, Volume 5 (1958), 49–73; Lodi Nauta and Detlev Pätzold, eds, *Imagination in the Later Middle Ages and Early Modern Times* (Leuven: Peeters, 2004); John D. Lyons, *Before Imagination: Embodied Thought from Montaigne to Rousseau* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

travel through the medium of the air, striking the optic nerve and from there being conveyed to the *sensus communis*, or common sense, the first ventricle of the brain. The *sensus communis* sorts these impressions, and passes them on to the imagination and then to the fantasy, where the impressions are collated and assembled into *phantasmata*, which are passed on to the memory for storage and evaluation.[13] Because the first step in this process, the transformation of sense impression into mental images or representations is physiological, the imagination was seen to be particularly prone to the body's disruptive impulses, liable to disease, humoral surfeit, and demonic infection, caused by the devil's ability to distort the form of the *species*, or manipulate the shape of the *phantasmata*.[14]

From the fourteenth century onwards, cracks started to appear in the complex edifice of medieval faculty psychology. The existence of the *species* began to be called into question. The findings of anatomical investigation appeared to disprove the existence of ventricles in the brain. As a result, the place of the imagination in the cognitive process began to lose its stable moorings. During the fifteenth and sixteenth century, moreover, developments in the science of perspective, in optics and epistemology led, as Stuart Clark has shown in *Vanities of the Eye*, to increasing concerns about the fallibility of the mechanisms of mental representation, and the potential lack of correspondence between external objects and the images generated by the imagination.[15] From the sixteenth century onwards, there is a tendency to dispense with the idea of separate mental faculties, in favour of a unitary model of the soul. This search for an undivided soul perhaps explains to some extent the increasing attractiveness of alternative models of the soul or mind, such as those provided by Stoicism. Stoic *phantasia* does in fact draw into its remit most mental operations including perception, dreams, and more generally the movements of consciousness.[16] This influence of Stoic epistemology has been traced in the work of Montaigne, whose account of the role of the imagination in an essay such as 'De la force de l'imagination' and 'De l'inconstance de noz actions' emphasize its waywardness, vanity, and inconstancy, and yet accords it an absolutely crucial role in human thought and action.[17] Pierre Charron's *De la Sagesse*, translated into English by Samson Lennard in 1608, is not uncharacteristic in its prevaricating between a unitary and a composite theory of the soul, when describing the imagination as 'either the onley, or at least the most active and stirring faculty of the soule'.[18] One thing is certain, though: for Charron, and for many others with him, the power of

[13] Olaf Pluta, 'On the Matter of the Mind. Late Medieval Views on Mind, Body and Imagination', in *Imagination*, ed. Nauta and Pätzold, 21–33; Matthew Milner, *The Senses and the English Reformation* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), ch. 1, 'The senses and sensing in fifteenth century England', 13–51.

[14] See Angus Gowland, 'Melancholy, Imagination, and Dreaming in Renaissance Learning', in *Diseases of the Imagination and Imaginary Disease in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Yasmin Haskell (Brepols: Turnhout, 2012), 53–102.

[15] Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 'Introduction', 1–9, 2.

[16] Cocking, *Imagination*, 23.

[17] On Stoicism in Montaigne's account of the imagination, see Lyons, *Before Imagination,* ch. 1, 'The Return of Stoic Imagination', 32–60.

[18] Pierre Charron, *Of Wisdom Three Bookes Written by Pierre Charron, Doctor of Lawe in Paris*, trans. Samson Lennard (London: Printed for Edward Blount & Witt Aspley), 54.

the imagination was vast, and somewhat terrifying: 'The imagination is a thing very strong, very powerful, it is that makes all the stirre, all the clatter, yea the perturbation of the world proceeds from it'.[19]

In early modern England, such concerns were compounded by the revitalization of the ancient debate on the role of images in religious worship brought about by Reformation. Hostility towards the worship of images, most immediately associated with the Lollards, did in fact characterize much of late medieval high theology.[20] During the sixteenth century, it was one of the attitudes shared by many reformers who otherwise held radically different views, such as Erasmus, Andreas Karlstadt, Martin Bucer, and John Calvin.

The rejection of images forms a continuous sub-current in Western Christianity that emerged to the surface with varying force and destructiveness at different moments in history. Even so, the iconoclastic controversy of mid- and late sixteenth century nevertheless constituted a particularly vehement flare-up of this ancient controversy. Margaret Aston's *England's Iconoclasts* has drawn to two particular developments in the controversy about images which, I believe, form an essential background to Greville's poetic thinking about the idols of the mind. Aston notes how, following the destruction and removal of images from the churches during the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth I, the closing decades of the sixteenth century witnessed an increasing concern with the dangers of mental idolatry: 'From an initial concern with image making (the fantasies of the mind) as part of the production of external images, the purifiers became focused on the errors of mental images per se'.[21] William Perkins, whose voluminous *A Warning of the Idolatrie of the Last Times* systematizes the Reformed polemic against images, draws attention to the connection between idolatry and the mechanisms of mental representation: Any image made with the purpose of worshipping God, or representing him, Perkins argues, is an idol. Responding the question of why it is not lawful to represent God in the way in which we conceive him in the mind, Perkins explains:

> I answer, the right way to conceive god is not to conceive any form: but to conceive in minde his properties and proper effects. So soone as the minde frames unto itself any forme of God (as when he is popishly conceived to be like an old man sitting in a throne with a scepter in his hand) an idol is set up in the mind.[22]

God is a spiritual being and can therefore not be represented in material form. These ideas are in no way particularly new or original: large parts of Perkins' treatise

[19] Ibid.

[20] Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers. Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1984); Matthew Dimmock, James Simpson, and Nicolette Zeeman, eds, *Images, Idolatry and Iconoclasm in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), introduction and ch. 6, 'Et que est huius ydoli materia? Tuipse: Idols and Images in Walter Hilton'; and Carlos M.N. Eire, *War against the Idols. The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[21] Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, vol. I, *Laws against Images* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 458–9. See also Clark, *Vanities of the Eye*, ch. 5, 'Images: The Reformation of the Eyes', 161–235.

[22] William Perkins, *A Warning against the Idolatry of the Last Times, And an instruction touching religious or divine worship* (London: John Leggat 1616), 27.

draw directly on the writings of the Church Fathers, referring frequently to works such as Tertullian's *De spectaculis* and *De idolatria*; Origin's *Contra Celsum* and Augustine's *De civitate Dei*; *De vera religione*; *De doctrina christiana, De haeresibus ad Quodvultdeum*, and the *Ennarationes in Psalmos*. One can nevertheless argue that the continuing polemic on the status of images between Reformed authors and Catholic, mostly Jesuit opponents, contributed to the increasing focus in Reformed writing on the dangers of representation as such. In result, the distinction, first made by Origin, between the *eidolon*, a representation of something without prototype in nature, such as for instance a centaur, and an *eikon*, defined as a mimetic image of an existing thing or object, and still maintained in the earlier controversial works on image worship, such as Karlstadt's *Von Abtuhung der Bilder* (1522), which distinguishes images (*Bilder*) from idols (*Götze*), came increasingly under pressure.[23] Whereas the defenders of images tended to uphold the validity of the distinction between idol and images, Reformed Protestant literature increasingly tended towards the elision of the difference between the two.

The problem was in part one of translation and interpretation: while the word *eidolatria* does not figure in the Septuagint, the Hebrew Old Testament counted no less than thirty words which the Septuagint and Vulgate rendered as eidolon, *idolum*, or *simulacrum*.[24] Yet for Lancelot Andrewes, the crucial distinction between Reformed and Catholic on this point centered on the meaning of the disputed word *pesel*. It had, Andrews argued, a broader significance than either *eikon* or *eidolon*, and indicated 'any kind of conception or imagination which may arise'.[25] 'When a new doctrine is divised', Perkins maintained, quoting Jerome, 'an idol is set up in the hearts and souls of believers. A false opinion is an idol of falsehood'.[26] Biblical scholarship and the pressure of confessional polemic combined resulted in an increasingly forceful denial of the distinction between idol and image. The insistence on the radical transcendence of God exposed a chasm between Creator and creation that threatened to engulf the very possibility of representing or imagining the deity. As the boundaries of the idea of representation shifted, any form of representational thought was perceived to expose the believer to the dangers of idolatry.

This suspicion of the mind's habit of thinking through images may strike the reader as incongruous with the commonly held assumption in the Aristotelian and scholastic tradition of psychology, that all thinking involved images, involved mental representation of some sort. The distrust of the imagination's image-making capacity derived, however, from a tributary tradition based on Augustine's discussion of the faculty in book twelve of *De Genesi ad litteram*, which influenced the subsequent accounts in Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* (1a.78.4; Ia.84.6–7; I a.90.1), and Dante's *La Vita Nova*.[27] Augustine's innovation was to accord the will a central

[23] Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 398.
[24] Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 398.
[25] Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 393.
[26] Perkins, *A Warning against the Idolatrie of the Last Times*, 15.
[27] Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, trans. John Hammond Taylor S.J., II vols. *Ancient Christian Writers. The Work of the Fathers in Translation no. 42* (New York: Newman Press, 1982), Volume 2, XII, 178–231. An extensive discussion of Augustine's views on the imagination can

place in his discussion of the imagination. The will and the intellect conjointly share the task of safeguarding the correspondence between the image in the mind and its external object. Yet more often than not these guardians fail in their duty, turning the products of the imagination into a fountain of error, self-deception, and libidinous distraction. Augustine's account of the imagination is shaped by what, in fact, is intentionality: the way we bring our own attention to bear upon the objects of consciousness. As J.M. Cocking argues:

> Augustine recognizes that wat we see depends to some extent on what we are looking for, and that if we are looking for something with enough desire, or 'vehemence', we shall mistake our self-created image for the real thing, and give rise to hallucinations or bodily reactions identical with those that would take place of the image were real and not fictional.[28]

It is because of the imagination's fatal imbrication in the will and the affections that its creations carry the risk of sweeping the soul away in a torrent of sin and error. The scholastic tradition, rooted in the theology of the Dominican order, with its contrast to the Augustians' more positive evaluation of the faculties of fallen man, tends to give less emphasis to the imagination's waywardness and its alliance with the corrupt affections and will. In the work of the sixteenth century Reformers, whose work witnessed a renewal of interest in Augustine's psychology of original sin, the emphasis on the corrupt imagination is once more given stark relief. From the imagination, Calvin argues in the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, proceeds:

> that immense flood of error with which the whole world is overflowed. Every individual mind being a kind of labyrinth, it is not wonderful not only that each nation has adopted a variety of fictions, but that almost every man has his own God. To the darkness of ignorance have been added presumption and wantonness, and hence there is scarcely and individual to be found without some idol or phantom as a substitute for the Deity.[29]

Because of the depravity of our affections, our imaginations are always and inevitably corrupt. In the *Treatie of Human Learning*, Greville thus argues: 'This power besides, always cannot receive/ What sense reports, but what th'affections please', to conclude:

> So must th'Imagination from the sense
> Be misinformed, while our affections cast
> False shapes, and forms on their intelligence,
> To keep out true intromission thence,

be found in Gerard O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind* (London: Duckworth, 1987), ch. 4, 'Imagination', 106–30. St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 60 Volumes, Volume 11–13, *Man*, edited by Timothy Suttor (London: Blackfriars/Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1963–1975), Volume 11 (1970), 137–43; Volume 12 (1968), 32–43; Volume 13 (1964), 2–7; On the influence of *De Genesi ad litteram* on later theories of the imagination, see Allan D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A, ed., *Augustine through the Ages. An Encyclopedia* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 442–3.

[28] J.M. Cocking, *Imagination. A Study in the History of an Idea* (London: Routledge, 1990), 74.

[29] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John T. McNeill, ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), I.5.12, 23.

abstracts the imagination or distasts,
With images preoccupately plac'd
Hence our desires, feares, hopes, love, hate, and sorrow,
In fancy make us heare, feele, see impressions,
Such as out of our sense they do not borrow;
And are the efficient cause, the true progression
Of sleeping visions, idle phantasms waking
Life, dreames; and knowledge, apparitions making.
(*HL*, 12–13)[30]

These stanzas demonstrate Greville's careful application of the terminology of faculty psychology, with its distinction between the imagination and the fantasy as two separate parts of the imaginative capacity of the mind. Greville's choice of words, however, signals yet another, additional set of intellectual concerns which have less to do with the corruption of the will which preoccupied Church fathers and Reformers, and more with the forms of undisciplined, unreformed reasoning someone like Francis Bacon blamed for the lack of progress in human learning. For Bacon, the imagination's unruly tendencies are directly linked to the theory of the idols of the mind. In *De augmentis scientiarum*, Bacon describes how the senses convey images (*idola*) to the imagination, which are then processed by memory and reason. The idols of the mind, in turn, are described as either false images (*imagines*) or as notions that are 'corrupt, disordered, and recklessly abstracted from things'. Abstraction here is the term for the imagination's flight away from the particulars of experience, towards the generalities and principles of things.[31] Greville's description for the situation in which true impressions have been 'crowded out' by false ones strikes a similarly Baconian note. In fact, 'preoccupation' is Bacon's term for the state in which the mind rests in false notions and no longer pursues inquiry.[32] As Sorana Coreanu and Koen Vermeir have argued, Bacon's account of cognition in *De augmentis scientiarum* shows the influence of Stoicism, which awards the imagination a central part in all cognitive processes.[33] Stoic epistemology viewed the cognitive process as the reception image-like imprint (*fantasia*) in the material soul, to which it gives assent (*synkathesis*). Concerning the mind's action in judging, Bacon writes, 'the same action of the mind which discovers the thing in question judges it; and the operation is not performed by help of any middle term, but directly, almost in the same manner as by the sense.'[34]

A similar configuration one finds in Greville, particularly in his Neostoic epistle of comfort, the *Letter to an Honourable Lady*.[35] In this work, Greville does not so much as set out to console his addressee, as to embark on the destruction of her

[30] Wilkes. All references are to this edition.

[31] 'the mind longs to leap up to higher generalities to. and rest there; and after a short while scorns experience', *Novum Organon*, in: *The Oxford Francis Bacon*, Volume 11: *The Instauratio magna* Part II: *Novum organum and Associated Texts*, ed. Graham Rees and Maria Wakely (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), I, xx, 71.

[32] Sorana Coreanu and Koen Vermeir, 'Idols of the Imagination: Francis Bacon on the Imagination and the Medicine of the Mind', *Perspectives on Science* 20.2 (2012): 183–206, 193.

[33] Coreanu and Vermeir, 'Idols of the Imagination', 186–8.

[34] Coreanu and Vermeir, 'Idols of the Imagination', 187.

[35] *Letter to an Honourable Lady*, Gouws.

illusions, a project he likens, brutally, to the demolition of a ruined house that is threatening to fall down on its owner.[36] The ruins are the lady's hopes, thoughts, and plans to improve her situation or her marriage; all illusions that can be traced back to the two dominant passions of hope and fear.[37] For Greville, the passions, which he defines, following Cicero, as diseases of the mind, are the source of cognitive error, erroneous value judgements that leads us out of ourselves and into the world, giving ourselves over to fortune.[38] 'Beleeve therefore, with the wise; that betweene mistie objects, and more mistie senses, many things doe rather terrifie than oppress; and so force frail mankinde to labor more in opinion, than in thinges'.[39] Rather than relying on any external aid, she must learn to depend on her own powers, realizing the only freedom that can truly be called such is the mind's power over its own thoughts and affections, or what Greville calls 'a calm and calming *mens adepta*.[40] The final part of the *Letter*, however, signals the move away from Stoic ethics towards the need for divine grace, showing how even the idea of Stoic self-sufficiency is, ultimately, a fiction, albeit a relatively harmless one.[41] Stoicism and Calvinism are contiguous, rather than, as is sometimes maintained, mutually exclusive: in thinking about the imagination, Greville's Stoicism merely serves to place an additional epistemological challenge unto the burden of the flesh.[42]

When it comes to the analysis of the psychological mechanism of affective intentionality, it makes no difference whether our idol is a woman, or a false conception of God: our passions and 'wit', the part of the rational mind most closely allied with the imagination, 'infect' our perceptions, corrupting and distorting the images constructed by the fantasy:

> But our infirmitie, which cannot brooke
> This strong, intestine, and rebelliouse warre,
> In wit and our affections make us looke
> For such Religions as there imag'd are:
> Hence grow these manie worships, Gods, and sects,
> Wherewith man's error all the world infects
> For when the Conscience thus Religion fashions
> In blinde affections, there it straight begetts
> Grosse superstition; when in wittie passions
> It moulded is, a lustre there it setts
> On hearts prophane, by politique pretense;
> Both buying shadows with the soules expence
> (*TR*, 16–17)

The language of imaginative infection and contagion can be found in Bacon, and yet the emphasis here lies, perhaps, more strongly on the way affective sense

[36] *Letter*, Gouws, cap. 3, 150. [37] *Letter*, Gouws, cap. 4, 156–7.
[38] *Letter*, Gouws, cap. 5, 169–70, compare Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, ed. and trans. J.E. King (London: Heinemann, 1927), 402.
[39] *Letter*, Gouws, cap. 4, 161. [40] *Letter*, Gouws, cap. 5, 170.
[41] *Letter*, Gouws, cap. 6, 172–6.
[42] On the compatibility of Stoicism and Calvinist ethics, see Christoph Strohm, *Ethik im frühen Calvinismus.Humanistische Einflüsse, philosophische, juristische und theologische Argumentationen sowie Mentalitätgeschichtliche Aspekte am Beispiel des Calvin Schulers Lambert Danaeus* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1996), Part III 'Wirkungen des Stoarenaissance in *Ethices Libri* III', 116–93.

perception allows original sin to be 'taken' from the world and communicated back into it: 'Fleshe the foundation is, fancie the worke/ Where rak'd up, and unquencht the evills lurke.' (*TR*, 22) This inevitably raises the question of how, when we cannot form an adequate conception of God, we can be sure to know him: 'Then by affecting powre we cannot know him,/ By knowing all thinges else we know him lesse;/ Nature containes him not, Art cannot show him,/ Opinions, idolles, and not God expresse' (*TR*, 6). The remaining sparks of natural religiosity which remain even in fallen humanity will spur the creature to seek out its Creator, yet looking into itself, it finds only remnants of the divine image, distorted almost beyond recognition. In this way, the Law functions as a mirror: 'in it, we contemplate our weakness, then the iniquity arising from this, and finally the curse coming from both—just as a mirror shows us the spots on our face'.[43] In Reformed theology, the psychological shock and horror of recognition are taken to compel the individual to accept its unworthiness, and to expect salvation only through the grace of God. In his chapter of the role of 'fantasy' in Protestant literature in *Protestantism and Drama*, Adrian Streete has analysed the mechanisms through which the fantasy, cut loose from its representational shackles, becomes constitutive of subjectivity. At the heart of these concerns, Streete argues, is not so much intromission, but 'extramission', the mechanism through which the idols of the mind take form in the outside world; the way in which figurative images appear to become 'invested with a degree of ontological truth'.[44] 'Originary worthiness and present unworthiness are the essential components of the Calvinist dialectic. It is only through this struggle between "primal worthiness" and present "foulness" that "abhorrence" comes about: subjectivity is mimetically produced by confronting the memory of an originary worthiness now perceived as primary lack, humility and the desire for grace.'[45]

While Greville's account of the imagination's productive powers no doubt ultimately derives from his Calvinist beliefs, even there where his language and ideas show a demonstrable influence of Stoicism, it was an altogether different tradition that furnished him with the conceptual vocabulary to analyse its operation, and to examine the dynamics of extramission. The love poetry in Greville's *Caelica*, as I shall argue in the second part of this chapter, scrutinizes the link between the imaginative faculty and the creation of fictions. Greville here appears to draw from a different strand of ideas deriving from Renaissance rhetoric and poetics which, with perverse pleasure, turns against itself to expose the erotic entanglement of the mind in fictions of its own making.

Centaurs of the Mind: Desire, Mimesis, and Erotic Fixation

The suspicion about the imaginative faculty that we have traced in the body of literature discussed above, and which indeed, in various shades and nuances is

[43] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.7.7.

[44] Adrian Streete, *Protestantism and Drama in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), ch. 4, 'Perception and fantasy in early modern Protestant discourse', 110–26, 113.

[45] Streete, *Protestantism and Drama*, 91.

shared between authors as different in other respects as Calvin and Charron exercised a powerful influence of the culture of the later Renaissance. It was, however, by no means the only intellectual resource available. While both the gradual erosion of the certainties of faculty psychology, the rise of Neostoic theories of mind, and the revival of an Augustinian anthropology of original sin and grace all contributed to downgrade the imagination, or at least to highlight its dangers, the Renaissance revival of Neoplatonism, as well as new developments in Renaissance rhetoric and poetics both allowed for a positive, and indeed enthusiastic appreciation of the imagination's powers.

The work of the Florentine Neoplatonist Marsilio Ficino played a defining role in shaping Renaissance theories of love, inspiration, and divine *furor*. While Ficino was not an enthusiast of the imagination, ranking it firmly below the rational powers of the mind, elements of his work, particularly his celebration of the creative powers of man in the eighth book of *Theologia platonica*, would contribute to later theoretization of the link between the imagination and artistic creativity.[46] Drawing back on the ideas of Proclus, moreover, Renaissance Neoplatonism recast the imagination as a mediating faculty through which angelic powers transmitted insights in the form of images.[47] In the work of Ficino, images are often hypostatized: 'They become substantial, having the same substance as the astral body and the heavenly bodies, and are the mediators through which mind can act on matter by bringing to bear on them the *vis imaginativa*.[48]

While the exact nature and extent of the influence of Neoplatonic ideas on late Elizabethan culture is controversial, the cosmopolitan and intellectually tolerant environment of the Leicester–Sidney circle appears at least to have been open to its influence. Neoplatonic ideas furnished the intellectual foundation of the Hermetic and magical experiments of John Dee, whose connections to the Sidney family were particularly close, and who was for a time, tutor to both Sidney and, possibly, Greville.[49] More controversially, Greville could have encountered these ideas through the figure of Giordano Bruno, the heterodox ex-friar from Nola, who dedicated two of his works to Sidney, and whose *Cena delle Ceneri* (1584) was set in Greville's London residence.[50] Bruno's works such as *De umbris idearum* (1582) and *Explicatio triginta sigillorum* (1583) brought Neoplatonism's communicative mental images to bear on Renaissance mnemotechnics. Following Proclus, Bruno employs these products of the imagination, replacing the fixed images of the art of memory (the images described as *imagines agentes* in the rhetorical tradition) with the mediating images that express the soul's own dynamic powers.[51]

[46] Cocking, *Imagination*, 168–94.
[47] Cocking, *Imagination*, 173.
[48] Cocking, *Imagination*, 181.
[49] Peter J. French, *John Dee: The World of an Elizabethan Magus* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972) ch. 6, 'John Dee and the Sidney Circle', 126–49.
[50] On Greville and Bruno, see the contribution of Fabio Raimondi in Chapter 9 of this volume.
[51] Alessandro G. Farinella and Carole Preston, 'Giordano Bruno: Neoplatonism and the Wheel of Memory in the *De Umbris Idearum*', *Renaissance Quarterly* 55.2 (2002): 596–624, 599. Bruno's Art of Memory is discussed more extensively in Frances Yates's classic *The Art of Memory*. Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966).

Probably less controversial, and certainly more influential, would have been the account of imagination in Renaissance rhetorical and poetical treatises. As Peter Mack has demonstrated, from about the 1580s onwards, these manuals and handbooks begin to evince a distinctly more positive evaluation of the imaginative faculty.[52] This development can be traced back to the rediscovery of the rhetorical and poetical treatises of late Antiquity, such as Quintilian's *Instiutio Oratoria*, Longinus's *Peri Hypsous*, and Philostratus's *Life of Appolonius of Tyana*, in whose work the classical, technical-philosophical concept of *phantasia* had first come to be used in a wider sense to denote something like the creative powers of the mind.[53] All three works use the term in a loose manner to describe both the mental faculty and the images it creates. Quintilian discusses *phantasia* in book VI of the *Institutio oratoria* in a passage directly following his discussion of the mimetic nature of the emotions, and immediately before discussing *enargeia*:

> The person who will show the greatest power in the expression of emotions will be the person who has properly formed what the Greeks call *phantasiai* (let us call them 'visions'), by which the images of absent things are presented to the mind in such a way that we seem actually to see them with our eyes and have them physically present to us. Some use the word *euphantasiōtos* of one who is exceptionally good at realistically imagining to himself things, words, and actions. We can indeed easily make this happen at will. When the mind is idle or occupied with wishful thinking or a sort of daydreaming, the images of which I am speaking haunt us, and we think we are travelling or sailing or fighting a battle or addressing a crowd or disposing of wealth which we do not possess, and not just imagining but actually doing these things! Can we not turn this mental vice to a useful purpose? Surely we can.

From this capacity, Quintilian argues, arises 'enargeia, what Cicero calls *illustratio* and *evidentia*, a quality which makes us seem not so much to be talking about something as exhibiting it. Emotions will ensue just as if we were present at the event itself'.[54]

Longinus's treatment of *phantasia* has elements in common with that of Quintilian, although he distinguishes its effects in rhetoric (*enargeia*) from its effects in poetry (*ekplexis*). He defines *phantasia*, moreover, not so much as facility that can be trained but as one of the hallmarks of the sublime, describing how it occurs when 'carried away by inspiration and emotion, you think you see what you describe and you place it before the eyes of the hearers.'[55] A text like Puttenham's

[52] Peter Mack, 'Early Modern Ideas of Imagination: the Rhetorical Tradition', in Nauta and Pätzold, *Imagination*, 59–76, 72–5.

[53] Gerard Watson, Phantasia *in Classical Thought* (Galway: Galway University Press, 1988), ch. 4, 'The transformation of *phantasia*', 59–95, 59.

[54] Quintilian, *The Orator's Education*, Volume III: Books 6–8, ed. and trans. Donald A. Russell (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 6.2.26–32, 58–61.

[55] Longinus, *On Style*, in *Aristotle: Poetics. Longinus: On the Sublime. Demetrius: On Style*, trans. Stephen Halliwell, W. Hamilton Fyfe, Doreen C. Innes, and W. Rhys Roberts. Revised by Donald A. Russell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 15, 214–17. On Longinus in the Renaissance, see Eugenio Refini, 'Longinus and Poetic Imagination in Late Renaissance Literary Theory', in *Translations of the Sublime. The Early Modern Reception and Dissemination of Longinus*' Peri Hupsous *in Rhetoric, the Visual Arts, Architecture and the Theatre* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 33–53.

Arte of English Poetry draws from this tradition, echoing Quintilian's remarks on the man of capacious imagination, but claiming, if anything, even wider scope for the powers of the fantasy:

> Wherefore, such persons as be illuminated with the brightest irradiations of knowledge and of the verity and due proportion of things, they are called by the learned men not *phantastikoi* but *euphantasiōtoi*, and of this sort of fantasy are all good poets, notable captains stratagematic, all cunning artificers and legislaters, politicians and counsellors of estate, in whose exercises the inventive part is most employed and is to the sound and true judgement of man most needful.[56]

Nor did *phantasia*'s triumph end there. Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* argues for the superiority of *phantasia* over *mimesis* (here conceived narrowly as the imitation of nature, rather than as *mimesis* in the Aristotelian sense) in a phrase that seems to be echoed on Sidney's comparison between the 'narrow warrant of nature's gifts', and the 'zodiac' of the poet's wit: *Phantasia* is more skilled craftsman than *mimesis*. 'For *mimesis* will produce only what she has seen, but *phantasia* even what she has not seen as well; and she will produce it referring to the standard of the perfect reality.'[57] This positive evaluation of *phantasia* eventually found its way back into faculty-psychological treatises. When Bishop Edward Reynolds, in most other respects an unsuspected Calvinist, discusses the imagination in his *Treatise of the Passions and Faculties of the Soul of Man* (1629) he sounds closer to Sidney than Calvin.

> … for reason and all other powers, have their fixed and determined limits in nature, and therefore they always frame themselves to the truth of things, yielding assent to nothing but what they finde: But imagination is a faculty boundless, and impatient of any imposed limits, save those which it selfe maketh. And hence it is that in matter of persuasion and insinuation, Poetrie, Mythologie, and Eloquence, (the arts of rationall fancie have ever, (as was observed) beene more forcible than those which have been rigorously grounded on Nature and Reason: it being, as Scaliger observes, the natural infiniteness of man's Soule, [asp]ernari artorum finium praescriptionem, to disdaine any bound and confines in her operations.[58]

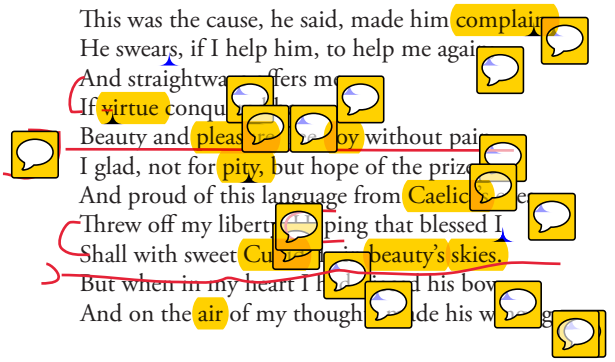
Indeed, according to Reynolds, it is because of the fact that the imagination is unlimited, that we can conceive God at all. And yet it is not autonomous power of the fantasy which allows man to comprehend the godhead, but divine accommodation. In order that we may 'see' God in his Word, Calvin writes, the Bible speaks to us in figural language. It employs metaphor, symbols, parables, and similitudes, 'whereby heavenly doctrines are shadowed forth, and do condiscend unto human frailties'.[59] It is then perhaps not coincidental that Greville returns to an image of poetic creativity to trace the genesis of idolatry:

> Who those characteristicall *Ideas*
> Conceives, which Science of the Godhead be?
> But in their stead we raise, and mould Trophaes

[56] Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Universtiy Press, 1970), I.8.
[57] Watson, *Phantasia in Classical Thought*, 63, compare Sidney, *Defence* 9.
[58] Edward Reynolds, *A Treatise of the Passions and the Faculties of the Soul of Man* [1640] (Gainsville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1971), p 24.
[59] Reynolds, *A Treatise of the Passions*, 21.

> Formes of Opinion, Wit and Vanity,
> Which we call *Arts*, and fall in love with these,
> As did Pygmalion with his carved tree;
> For which men, all the life they here enjoy
> Still Fight, as for the Helens of their Troy
> (~~*Treatie of Humane Learning*~~, 25)

Greville's espousal of a Platonic vocabulary of ideas and forms here signals the difficulty inherent in the kind of imaginative transcendence beloved of the Neoplatonists. His account inverts the traditional interpretation of the myth of Pygmalion as an allegory of *poesis*, the creative, god-like power of the artist (and by extension, the poet) and, all the while poignantly demonstrating the poet's own imaginative debt to Ovid, turns it into a fiction of artistic impotence, emphasized in the choice of the iconoclastic 'carved tree' for Ovid's ivory statue of Galatea. Greville's use of Ovid's story is, it has to be admitted, not entirely novel. Indeed, as early as Jean de Meung's continuation of the *Roman de la Rose*, the story of Pygmalion figures as an example of the idolatrous nature of courtly love.[60] Yet what is important here, I believe, is that in Greville's literary environment, in the work of Neoplatonists such as Bruno, or those at least influenced by its philosophy, such as Spenser, Samuel Daniel, and, to some extent Philip Sidney, metamorphosis figures as an allegory of erotic or spiritual transformation.[61] Greville, in a way that is perhaps closer to Petrarch's own use of the Ovidian material, uses the idea of metamorphosis as a metaphor for the alienation, self-division, and self-loss that follows misdirected love. The ~~(~~faulty~~)~~ powers of the imagination play a central role in Greville's examination of the conventions of courtly love lyric. *Caelica* XXXVII figures a captive Cupid, who has been thrown into a well, and a lover hoping to employ the winged god's services to conquer the Lady's chastity:



> This was the cause, he said, made him complain
> He swears, if I help him, to help me again
> And straightway offers me
> If virtue conquer
> Beauty and pleasure joy without pain
> I glad, not for pity, but hope of the prize
> And proud of this language from Caelica
> Threw off my liberty ping that blessed I
> Shall with sweet Cu beauty's skies.
> But when in my heart I his boy
> And on the air of my though de his w

[60] Nicolette Zeeman, 'The Idol of the Text', in *Images, Idolatry and Iconoclasm*, ed. Dimmock, Simpson, and Zeeman, 43–62, 55–8.

[61] On Neoplatonism see Robert Ellrodt, *Neoplatonism in the Poetry of Spenser* (Folcroft, Pa., Folcroft Press, 1969); Anna Baldwin and Sarah Hutton, *Plato and the English Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Verena Olejniczak Lobsien, *Transparency and Dissimulation: Configurations of Neoplatonism in Early Modern English Literature* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012). On Sidney and Bruno, see David Farley Hills, 'The "Argomento" of Bruno's *De gli eroici furori* and Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*', in *MLR* 87.1 (1992): 1–17; Parker, 'Philip Sidney and Proportional Form: *Astrophil and Stella, Certaine Sonets*, and Bruno's *De gli eroici furori*', in Parker, *Proportional Form*; Hillary Gatti, 'Petrarch, Sidney, Bruno', in Hillary Gatti, *Essays on Giordano Bruno* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011), 115–26.

The little lad fears the rod, He is not there a god
I and delight are odd, Myra says "—"
The flint keepeth fire, the lad he saith true,
But bellows, it will not be kindled by you;
He that takes staves with staves
Yet hath not all slaves
Love is not his that raves, he is untrue.

To fully grasp the import of Greville's satire, it is necessary to understand how the poetic conceit of love travelling through the beams emitted by the eye derived from medieval and Renaissance theories of vision, and needs in fact to understood as an concrete, physical process.[62] The problems and dangers inherent in this transaction had been explored by many a sonneteer, not in the last instance by Petrarch himself, yet in this poem, the lover's perplexity is compounded by a troubling loss of agency, and sense of the shifting or dissolution of the boundaries between subject and object. Nothing, obviously, quite works as it should here. Love appears to dwell in Myra's eyes but is evidently not doing a particularly good job, so the lover calls him back and reassembles him to launch another attack. Love, rather than being a dynamic force that has the potential, at least, to transcend through the material to spiritual, here seems to be consubstantial with the lover; made from his own desires and imaginations: 'But when in my heart I had pieced his bow/ And on the air of my thoughts made his wings go' With sardonic relish Greville literalizes the poetic conceit of Cupid travelling through the beams of the eye so as to make the lover's fixations redound on himself: 'The little lad fears the rod/ He is not there a god/ I and ~~D~~elight are odd/ Myra says "—"'

While the tone of the poem is humorous, even bantering, it nevertheless serves to make a serious point that courtly love is a fixation, a form of idolatry, and all the more nefarious for being, ultimately, a product of self-love. At the same time, the imagination, while spiritually barren, is an irreducibly productive faculty, and the fantasies it creates have effects in the world, in spite of their falsity. Yet because the imagination's creations are, psychologically, the products of self-love, they are by definition unstable, and interminable. *Caelica* 42 conveys the radical sense of fragmentation that follows:

Peliu[illegible]t loth was Thetis to forsake
Had [illegible]sell from the Gods to hold her fast
Fore-warn'd what lothsome likenesse she would take,
Yet, if he held come to her selfe at last.
He held; the snakes, serpents and the fire,
No monsters prov'd, but travells of desire
When I beheld how Caelica's fair eyes,
Did sh[illegible]er heart to some, her ~~W~~it to me
Chang[illegible]t doth prove the error, is not wit
In her [illegible] made me strange visions see

[62] On the physics of seeing in Renaissance image theory and painting, see Christian Kleinbub, '"To Sow the Heart": Touch, Spiritual Anatomy, and Image Theory in Michelangelo's "Noli me tangere"', *Renaissance Quarterly* 66.1 (2013): 81–129.

Desire held fast, till love's unconstant zone
Like Gorgon's head transform[ed] her heart to stone
From stone she tur[ned] to air, in air to cloud
Where water still h[olds] o'er fire,
And I poor Ixion to my [Juno] vowed
With thoughts to clip h[er] slipped[ery] ow[n] hair
For she was vanished, I held noth[ing] fast
But woes to come, and joys already past.
This [cold] straight makes a stream, in whose smooth face
Whi[le] the image of myself did glas[s]
Thought [sh]adows I for [her] beauty did e[mbrace]
Till strea[ms] all [de]pt the cold did pas[s]
Yet faith [held] fast like foils where stones be set,
To make to [the] fool more fond to get.
Thus our D[elight] like faire shapes in a glasse,
Though pleasing to our senses cannot last,
The metall breaks, or else the Visions passe
Onely our grief is constant moulds are cast
I'l[l] hold no m[ore] false Caelica, live free;
S[o] faire to all the world, and foule to me.

The opening lines of the poem lead us in to a dense labyrinth of Ovidian and Petrarchan allusions, recalling not one but several stories from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: Peleus and Thetis, Niobe, Ixion, Narcissus, and Echo. Greville's poem seems to echo Canzone XXIII of Petrarch's *Rime sparse*, a long poem known as the *Canzone delle metamorfosi*. In the poem, which can be read as a commentary and interpretation on the *Canzoniere* as a whole, the narrative of the poet's love is described as a series of transformations: he becomes a laurel, like Daphne, until his lady's cruelty turns him, Medusa-like, into stone, and so on, and on, until, like Echo, he is reduced to nothing but voice: 'I nervi et l'ossa/ Mi volse in dura selce, et cosi scossa / voce rimase de l'antiche some / Chiamando Morte e le sola per nome.'[63] In Greville's poem, by contrast, it is the mistress who is turned into stone, a reversal of the erotic dynamic of the Pygmalion story, and a making literal of the conceit of the Lady as idol. Her second alteration, from stone to cloud, evokes the seventh book of the *Metamorphoses*, which tells the story of how Ixion, king of the Lapiths, attempted to rape Juno. Instead of the goddess, he embraced her shape in the form of a cloud, and as punishment for his crime Jupiter sentenced him to be bound to a fiery, eternally rotating wheel.[64] From the union with the cloud, Centauros was born, father of the race of the Centaurs. Greville unpacks the well-known story until it supplies him with several separate metaphors. The rotating fiery wheel occurs several times in Greville's poetry and plays as a figure for the sinful mind, yet here it is clearly the metaphor of embracing a cloud that holds his fascination.

[63] 'She turned my sinews and my bones into hard flint, and thus I remained a voice shaken from my former burden, calling death and only her by name'. Petrarch, *Rime sparse*, xxiii, 137–40.

[64] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Frank Justus Miller (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press 1984 [1916]), IV, 61 and IX, 124; on the cloud form see XII, 504. See also Greville, *A Letter to an Honourable Lady*, 142–3.

Intriguingly, the Ixion story figures in a similar way in Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* as a warning against the 'vaporous' imagination.[65]

Yet throughout the poem imaginative processes and fantasies are rendered in the strongly physical, erotic language of grasping, clipping, and embracing. The ontological status of cloud of desire may be in doubt, but, like the centaurs it spawns, it has a reality of its own. Here, as in other places, Greville's uses of the word 'shadows' denote things of diminished ontological reality; imaginary constructs, reflections of reflections, which, like Narcissus's mirror-image, reflects the self back unto itself. More similar to the apparitions in *The Terrors of the Night* than to Bruno's 'shadows of the ideas', Greville's thought-shadows are simultaneously real and wholly insubstantial.

Greville's use of the Ovidian material is fragmentary, stripping the stories to their core, and employing them as loosely connected metaphors, which transform into new metaphors. The result is jarring and discordant and resembling something akin in effect, even though not in form, to *metalepsis*.[66] In these poems about failed communication, the effect is of course deliberate, with Greville using the idea of metamorphosis as a figure for the processes of objectivation and projection that guide the boundary traffic between the lover's imagination and the mistress as object of desire.

Many of the *Caelica* poems that chart the vagaries of desire have a philosophical, speculative tenor and are solemn, even dark in tone. Yet this is by no means necessarily the case. Sonnet ~~56~~, for instance, satirizes the Neoplatonic idea central to the theory of the ascent of love, that the idea of Beauty can be instantiated, even though only imperfectly, in human form. The poet-lover sees his lady asleep, 'naked on a bed of play', and is transported into increasingly grandiose erotic fantasies: he is Mars, and she is Venus; or perhaps he is Apollo, and she is Aurora, or better still, he is Jupiter, and she is Juno. Yet while his tumescent imagination runs away with him, Cynthia's body turns into water and slips away, escaping his embrace:

> There stand I, like Articke pole [illegible] Sol passeth o're the line,
> Mourning my benighted soule
> Which so loseth light divine
> There stand I like Men that preach
> From the [illegible]ution place
> At their d[illegible] content to teach
> All the world with their disgrace:
> He that lets his Cynthia lye,
> Naked on a bed of play
> To say prayers ere she dye,
> Teacheth time to runne away:
> Let no Love-desiring heart,

[65] Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, ed. Michael Kiernan, *The Oxford Francis Bacon* IV (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 12.

[66] Brian Cummings, 'Metalepsis: The Boundary of Metaphor', in *Renaissance Figures of Speech*, ed. Sylvia Adamson, Gavin Alexander, and Katrin Ettenhuber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 217–34.

In the Starres goe seeke his fate
Love is o[illegible]atures art,
Wonder [illegible]ers Love and Hate.
None can well behold with eyes,
But what underneath him lies.

More is at stake here, though, than humour alone. As Greville's erotic poetry raises questions about the relationship between the imagination, fiction, and desire, it also exploits the resources of poetry to explore the ontological status of the mental image and its relation to the outside world. Greville employs the idea of metamorphosis, using it as technique of fragmentation in which transformation does not mark an ending but sets into motion what seems to be a potentially indeterminable process. Erotic love thus becomes one of the lenses through which Greville views the paradox of the finite infinite, in which the restless, endless movement and striving becomes the sign of an ontological loss, of the soul's defection from an original state of greater perfection, and of its yearning for its origins.

It is here that the Augustinian streak in Greville's psychology is most pronounced. Although the poems never develop a formal opposition, there is a strong sense in which both erotic and divine love are species of *desiderium*, yet only divine love, 'a simple goodness in the flesh refin'd', (*Caelica* LXXXV) truly finds its object and leads to enjoyment. The fact that Greville sees idolatry as inextricably bound up with our thought processes might incline one to see his poetic as a form of 'inner iconoclasm'; a process of relentless self-examination and inner purification that obliged the believer, 'to act the iconoclast on the idol-processes of his mind'.[67] And yet this would be to fundamentally misunderstand the intent of these poems. For as Guagliardo argues in Chapter 13 of this volume 'while Greville discovers human nature's "ancient forming powers" behind the cracked edifice of the idol, he denies that acting on these powers will save us from idolatry'.[68] Greville's view of art is, Guagliardo points out, riven by a fundamental paradox that it is both the measure and limit of our alienation. Greville's slippery Galatea metaphorizes the erotics of idolatry by highlighting the element of self-love that makes the imagination fall in love with its own creations. The idea the arts might be able to restore our fall, or that we could have a form of worship other than one that is 'mixt of base thoughts and sublime;/ Of native evill, supernaturall good/ Truth born of God, and error of our blood' (*TR*, LI) turns out to be yet another idolatrous fiction. Only grace can transcend the flesh, and Greville's poetry effects, it has been noticed, a dual movement, an intellectual double-take, both away from the flesh, and back towards it.[69] Greville's superb debunking of the literary conventions of courtly love then turns out to be a markedly double-edged sword. By debasing idealizing love and placing it back into the realm of nature, time, and change, Greville not merely orients the

[67] Aston, England's *Iconoclasts*, 461.

[68] While I agree with Guagliardo about the paradoxical status of art in Greville's work, and share his analysis of what he terms the dialectic of idolatry, I disagree with his interpretation of this dialectic as anti-religious, or even anti-Calvinist. See Ethan Guagliardo's '"These Ancient Forming Powers": Fulke Greville's Dialectic of Idolatry', Chapter 13 in this volume.

[69] Gunn, 166.

subject towards divine love, he also opens up a space, no matter however slight, for love as 'nature's art'. By demystifying courtly love, Greville ~~effectively frees up a space for~~ love ~~as~~ 'nature's art', a love that is free from stifling conventions and from the straightjacket of fictions which are mere externalizations of mental fixations. Love, Greville knows as a good Calvinist, is not won through virtuous merit, service, or self-abnegation, quite the contrary: 'Desert is borne out of his bowe/ Reward upon his wing doth goe;'. Indeed those who believe they can merit love through their virtue spoil the fun, and lose their chances:

> Away with these self-loving Lads,
> whom Cupids arrow never glads:
> Away poore soules that sigh and weep,
> In love of those that lye asleepe
> For Cupid is a meadow-God
> And forceth none to kisse the rod.

Love, Greville argues, is by nature free and impatient of constraints: 'What fooles are they that have not knowne,/ That Love likes no Lawes but his owne' (*Caelica* LII)~~.~~. For Greville's insistence on love's fundamental autonomy also, sometimes, can be taken to mean that it is, in last resort, at least free from the conventions and constraints of social life, free that is, to and for all: 'And Love as well thee foster can,/ As can the mighty Noble-man'. If love is indeed nothing more than a game of chance, then at least everyone stands an equal chance of winning.